

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

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FIELD DIARY

Mr.

Vernon Bailey

(Official title.)

Period,

June 4

to

July 9, 1925

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~~F. L. Perry~~

~~Pharr, La.~~

~~Send circular on tanning~~

~~with Seichla also~~

June 4, 1925

Left Washington for New Orleans
at 9:35 P.M. on the Southern Ry.
with Mr. & Mrs. Seichla to study
muskrats in Louisiana.
Very hot and dry at Washington.

June 5, Daylight in South Carolina
still hot and dry until past
Atlanta, Ga., then rained and
cooled off nicely.

June 6, Reached New Orleans
7:20 A.M., got breakfast
at a French restaurant and
met Mr. Stanley C. Arthur
at his office, talked over plans
and went to the Cabellero,
the old jail where prisoners
were kept and where they have lived
up against the wall and shot.

Muskrat trap

Beambar 24" x 1 x 1/8 inch

Crossbar 21" x 1 x 1/8 "

Jaws 36 inch pin steel, 1/4 inch

Spring 40 inch no. 6 spring steel wire.

Trigger spring 18 inches of no. 10 wire

Trigger bar 6 inches of no. 10 steel wire.

Mr. Arthur took us for a long drive in evening to Audubon Park and out to the Yacht Club on Lake Pontchartrain along many fine avenues and among beautiful residences. Full moon, clear and cool and fresh breezes of the gulf climate.

Stayed at the Montblanc Hotel, a good hotel at moderate prices.

June 7 - Took 6:45 train for Morgan City and arrived about 10 AM. Went to Castillo Hotel, a comfortable place with a vast amount to eat at three big meals a day.

Stayed 3 days and explored the river and marshes and surrounding country for 15 miles down stream.

Mr. Louis Hebert, sec. of

Fur traders and Trappers Assn. of
Louisiana took us around and
looked out for us until Mr.
Arthur arrived June 9; and we
decided on a location about
10 miles down the river at
the pumping plant, No. 3,
where a large tract of marsh
land has been reclaimed
by diking and pumping the
water over into the tide swollen
bayous. The land has
not paid and the drainage
and land co. has gone into the
hands of receivers, but the
pumping stations are kept
going and the rich bottom
lands will some day be
valuable.

The no

June 10 Moved down to the pumping station with a freight boat and a whole outfit of camp supplies, grub, furniture, wire for traps and pens and all needed to set up a muskrat nursery. Have a good 5 room house but without any furniture except what we brought.

Had to spend much time in getting settled but also made some traps.

June 11, made more traps and when Mr. Mount came down with a fine big power boat and a little skiff - a dugout, we got out and set live traps in the marsh, 4 of them. Got a young swamp rabbit propit.

Snake

Caught a water Moccasin June 8 with a young screech owl in its stomach, nearly full grown & beginning to fly, and farther down in the intestines another mass of feathers from another bird.

Snakes

On June 12, a water moccasin about 2 feet long came up to the house of Mr. Davis 5 or 6 rods from the water and struck a chicken of brooder size on the breast.

Mrs. Davis saw it strike the chicken and chased it into the weeds. The chicken flopped about for about a minute and was dead. We found and killed the snake and then examined the chicken.

The neck and shoulder were black and clothed with blood, but we cut these off and ate the rest of the chicken.

June 12, Caught nothing but left the traps set for another night.

Mr. Mount returned to Morgan City, the Sobles going to bring back the boat and more supplies.

Windy and cool after several rainy days and cool nights.

We are right among the great marshes at sea level with time of a foot or two going past us up and down the rivers, some 40 miles from the Gulf coast.

Snakes

Out open a noceain, a black snake, and a king snake but found food in only one. The king snake, which had swallowed a slightly smaller one of its own or some other slender tailed species.

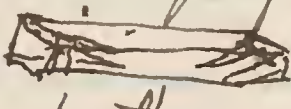
Saw several garter snakes.

Owls

Mr. Davis brought us an old screech owl that he found in the pump engine house, very dark and very gentle. We keep it in a box in daytime and out in the house at night.

June 13, Caught nothing.

The big grasshoppers ate all the bait they wanted, the oadred got out, the bananas rotted, the coconut rotted, and rain soaked everything. Still we will catch the muskrats soon or late.

Made another trap of the old rabbit style  but couldn't get the boat engine started so couldn't go to set it or fix up the others.

Tramped over dry marshes with big cracks full of water and alive with wigglers. Mosquitoes are very thick. We keep them partly screened out of the house but have to sleep in fine mesh bed tents.



June 14, The Soehls went to the traps in a little punt with two paddle power, started at 6:30 A.M. and have about 3 miles to go. Caught nothing.

June 19, Went to New Orleans to get springs for muskrat traps and staid over night at Hotel Monteleone.

June 20, Returned to Morgan City by Auto with Mr. Hebert. Got more trap material and reached camp at 6 P.M.

June 21 & 22, Made traps like beaver trap but smaller.

June 23. Mr. Stanley C. Arthur
and his party on the *Opalusia*
came to visit our camp and
brought us a good motor boat,
the *Coot*.

June 24, No muskrats yet.
Looked up traps on west side
of river and set over on east
side where rats are thicker and
grass not so tall.

Counted and marked 20 houses
on about 20 acres of marsh,
where not wet enough for alligators
but found few signs whether there
is any water on the surface.
Have 14 live traps out, 5 of the
beaver type and 6 square wire traps
and two double door wire and one
rabbit trap type.

Fire - - East of the river fire burned over last year when the ground was dry and killed out all the Canees, big grass cat-tails, tules, hibiscus and most of the *Scirpus*. "Wire grass", and one or two other small sedges (*Scirpus*) and a small "bent grass", some marsh millet and weeds make up the scattering marsh cover, but do not furnish a greater of the muskrat food found in the same area across the river where it did not burn.

It will take years for the old vegetation to return.

The fire may have killed some muskrats but it surely left them exposed so many must have been destroyed by their enemies.

June 27. Caught a small marsh turtle - one trap and shot an alligator in the wet marsh. He measured $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet, weighed about 40 lbs. I had two full grown muskrats in his stomach, one freshly swallowed and entire, the other well digested and vainly bones appear.

The alligator was grunting and I thought it was a full frog or a rail and followed it up and was much surprised to see it lying in the grass, half out of water.

I shot it with collecting pistol & no. 12 shot but at 3 feet from the muzzle and drove the whole load into its neck bone back of the skull.

It scarcely wiggled but later came to and fought and tried to bite me so I had to wire its mouth shut to get it back to the boat.

June 30 Staid all night in trappers
cabin to watch steel traps set for
muskrats. got none.
Mosquitos bad.

July 30 Borrowed 2 dozen no. 0
steel traps from Billy Burk
on Bayou Chene and wrapped the
jaws with cloth and made flag
poles with flags to pull out when
the rat was caught.

The Swoblas set a dozen of
these traps near the watch tower
and watched them until dark.

July 2 - The Swoblas went to
traps before sunrise and got one
muskrat, a two thirds grown female
of the year, probably 2 months old,
and containing 4 small embryos
a boy inch in diameter of each.
She weighed $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. and measured
472, 201, 68 mm. and was probably
2 months old. (No. 1 Swobla).
Stomach full of green stuff,
no roots or grain.

July 3, Mrs. Suchila caught another muskrat near the same place, just back of the tower. It is a well grown male, probably of last year, and caught by the front foot in a no. 0 trap with jaws well wrapped. The leg is badly hurt and swollen but evidently not broken and he is full of life and fight. Eats eagerly and after a day and night in a tub of water with a damp nest and a basket he is not much afraid and will take food from my hand and eat it while we watch him. Is partial to cat tail but eats leaves and stems of Parafirs grass.

July 4. Got nothing in traps,
Went down river to lake and
explored new country.

July 5. Caught nothing so went
hunting alligators with Billy Bantz
Found a large nest with 24 eggs in
it + got the eggs but could not find
the old gator.

Nest built like a muskrat house, about
2 feet high and 4 feet wide all of
cut grass and seeds and mud.
The eggs about 6 inches down in
top in damp warm decaying
grass where the sun kept it
warm all day and the interval
heat all night. The temperature
was about as warm as the air
at 9 AM of a hot day.



They were all in a pocket like
 a nest of ducks eggs, two or three
 deep in the middle, charcoal white
 and hard shelled. They are like
 large hens eggs but much ~~rough~~
 twice as long as wide, subcylindrical
 translucent at the ends and opaque
 around the middle. about $2\frac{1}{2}$
 inches by $1\frac{1}{4}$. Incubation had
 only begun tho Mr. Burk said
 he found the nest 3 weeks ago.
 It is only a slow process, probably
 depending on the weather.
 The yolk is milky, the whites
 dense densely heavy albumen.

rough hatching of eggs.

July 6 Caught a small female muskrat
in No. 1 trap well wrapped by hind
foot and the ankle was broken or
dislocated. The animal was full of
life and fought savagely and ~~may~~
live but the foot is much swollen
and will probably be lost.

Placed in a tub of cold water
on a waist nest of Spanish moss
she is quiet and holds the swollen
foot out carefully to protect it
but must suffer greatly.

Still she eats some Cat tail
base and parafin grass and
a little water melon.

A day or two will show whether
she will pull through.

Caught another old female
in the Gladiator trap made
by W. A. Gibbs & Son and
killed her instantly by

Striking the base of the skull
and breaking it and the neck.
A revised wire trigger was made for
the trap so the rat would step on it
— coming out of the hole in the water
and spring it like an Otter Sight
mouse trap. The trap has plenty
of power but should be a little narrower
with a metal base like a Schuyler
rat trap and would then be a good
burrow and runway trap for catching
& killing muskrats. The trigger
is no good and has to be entirely changed.

The old muskrat was large
weighing 2 lbs and measuring 529;
227; 72 (No. 2 Soehla).

she had just weaned her young but
the uterine scars showed the last litter
to have been 6. Was not pregnant
again but the vulva was open.

His stomach was full of mostly green vegetation that may have been grass or *Scirpus* with some brown and white material that was roots or seeds. Will try to catch her young which must be small, tho caring for themselves.

Reset 3 steel traps in muskrat houses.

July 7 - Caught nothing - the traps but set them in better places and set two alligator hooks out in wet marsh.

Went down the river 9 miles to Atchafalaya Bay and along the bay a few miles to the east, stopping at places to examine the marshes for muskrats. Found little sign for most of the marshes are dry and soggy clay but with big grasses and sedges and canes often a tangle of waving grass and *Opuntia opuntifolia*. Lots of pink and white willows.

At one point where we landed
the reef flat shore was solid clam shells
up two feet above high tide and here
were live oaks, hakeberry, hercules
club trees, willows, Ilex, Melia,
a few pear trees and lots of escaped
fruit trees, fig, white & purple figs, peach,
oleander, and tamarcs.

Also found a swarm of bees in a live oak.
Some one had lived there long ago.

No salt in the bay near shore.

Went in swimming with the
Thomas family who were down
in the bay with their boat for the
day.

July 8. - Caught two muskrats
alive and one dead, fixed up
pens and boxes for them.
We now have one male and
three females all caught in
steel traps with well padded
saws but, ^{all} with badly injured
feet.

July 9. The first muskrat caught
alive died from its injury,
the bone of the front foot sticks out
and the skin of the leg gradually
drew back until the whole shoulder
was exposed and raw and blood
poisoning set in and caused
death. She did not seem
to suffer much and ate well and
was getting so tame she would take food
from our hands.

Muskrat Foods. -

Cott tail, tender base of running root stalks eaten. Favorite food in cages.

Scirpus americanus, "3 square grass", Favorite food in marsh, stem & tender base of roots eaten.

"Parasol grass", Much eaten in marsh and a little in cages. Very tender stem and blades, roots tough and not eaten.

"Rhizo", Arundinaria tida, tender shoots eaten but not extensively.

"Millet grass", Echinochloa walteri tender stems eaten in marsh. Abundant - burnt over marshes.

Sedges, small round stems, very tender and good, eaten in cages and where found.

Sagittaria angustifolia - A few found eaten in marsh.

Hibiscus lasiocarpus, tuberous roots very good and said to be eaten by muskrats.

~~Euphorbia~~ Chenopodium, giant pigweed! fleshy base of stem said to be eaten by muskrats. and found eaten later on Marsh island.

July 10, Examined one of the muskrats caught by a live trap and found the leg broken and swinging and the foot in very bad shape! Gave her ether and removed the foot, sowed up the skin over the stump, using plenty of Bichloride of mercury and put her back in a soft nest of Spanish moss to revive - She came out of the anesthetic nicely and is doing well.

July 13, She seems fairly well recovered and normal and has a good chance to pull through. Runs around on her stump & a bird leg eats and drinks and deposits all her pellets in the water dish.

Muskrat foods continued.

Ballied oats, eagerly eaten in cages after a few days but not at first.

Rice, boiled rice is eagerly eaten in cages.

Carrot, generally refused in cages but Mrs. Silva found a small piece partly eaten.

Avocado shells, some of which eaten out.

Cantaloupe - Eaten in cages

Watermelon; A little eaten in cages.

Water hyacinth - Much cut and used for nests in cages and some apparently eaten. It seems to have little or no food value.

Green Corn is eaten in the cages and ripe corn is said to be eaten.

July 15, Took train for Morgan City
to New Orleans in P.M. and went
to Marlborough Hotel.

Arranged with Stanley C. Arthur
for trip to beaver colony in morning.

July 16, Took 8:30 A.M. train on
Illinois Central north to Amite
then drove across to Gretna and over on
a branch of the Amite River to see a
beaverdam on Dennis Creek.

Found a small dam across the creek
and a few cornstalks cut up for food in
the water. Followed a beaver trail for
105 steps back to a cornfield and
counted stumps of 53 cornstalks
the beavers had cut down and carried
away. The corn was poor and only small
ears and nutkins on it so not more
than a peck of corn had been lost
worth possibly 25 or at most
50 cents. This was the basis for

Another beaver dam is known over
near Clinton, west of the Amate River.

a letter to the Conservation Comm.
tho the beavers were destroying the
corn crop and a request to have
them caught. Only one or two
beavers were located here but
this dam was fresh and well
repaired and fresh muddy tracks
in the trail.

Saw much beautiful country
of open long leafed lob lolly
pine woods, mainly cut over
and well started in second
growth and charred and grassy
below. The stream bottoms are
heavily timbered with sweet gum,
sugar gum, oaks and sycamore
with a few cypresses in low
places.

Stopped at Amite and had
a pleasant visit with Hon. Baliver
E. Kenap, congressman from this district

Buffalo - Mr. J. C. Arthur says there were lots of buffalo along the north side of Lake Ponchartraine where old records describe their hunting and where Bayou Boef was named for them. Another Bayou Boef near Morgan City may have been named for them. Their southern limit of range should be worked out.

July 17, After a pleasant night at the home of Mr. Clyde Holland Deputy game warden. We went in his boat to another beaverdam on the Amite River, on a branch of it close to the river about 13 miles west of Gretna. Here the beavers had built a short high dam about 4 feet high across a small bayou at a strategic point of high banks of large cypress trees for fortresses on both banks. They had cut down no trees except very small ones and bushes but had gnawed the bark from the sides of a lot of short gum and pine trees, *Pinus mitis*, and a few hornbeams and an sour-gum. The pine bark had been peeled off on one side of the trees at a time but not clear round and the

Mammals of Greensboro, La.

Deer, common along Amite River, & elsewhere.
Fox squirrels " " " & in woods generally
Gray Squirrels " " " " "
Chipmunks ? Mr. Arthur thinks they are here.
Thyng squirrels Said to be com
Cottontail rabbit abun.
Swamp Rabbit "
Beaver 3 colonies
Mink com.
Otter com. 1824 caught in state last year.
Skunk & Spilogale com.
Weasel said to be common.
Beas a few in big swamps
Raccoon com.
Opossum "
Lynx "
Wolverine "
Felis said to be a few in swamps.
Moles com.
Walves - A few -

Wood had been very little cut into. apparently the inner bark had been eaten and it had been done for many years back. Several old timers including Tom Holland, editor of the local paper for 32 years, remember the time when there were lots of beavers in the streams around here and remembers the old trapper who caught most of them years ago. Eventually a few escaped and have become locally well established. The Conservation Com. is much interested in keeping them here and scattering them in suitable sections of the state.

Drove back to Greensboro and Amite and down to Hammond where we could catch an evening train to New Orleans. Arrived 9 P.M.

A cool, pleasant day and all beautiful country.

July 18. Left New Orleans at
A: 45 AM. for the Rainey Bird
Refuge. Train to New Iberia,
Auto to Abbeville, past the old
home of Joseph Jefferson, then
down the Vermilion Bayou to
the Rainey Refuge by boat. In the
Snipe, a boat of the Conservation
Commission. Bayou Vermilion
is one of the most beautiful
streams in the state with high
banks, picturesque wooded with
live oaks, cypress, gums, maples,
pines, ash and holly, often
heavily loaded with grape or
tangerine creepers, similar and
Spanish moss. Occasional low
shores bear palmettos and
sedges and tall grasses and
again farms and farm buildings
appear along the banks.
The cypress trees are of all the

Paul Rainey Refuge, La. July 19, 1925
Aligator ♂ 3 feet, stomach full of 106 small
fish of 5 or 6 species, one small water snake, one small
toad, one fiddler crab,

Aligator - ♀, 4 feet, stomach full, crabs and
fiddlers several of each, one bird, gallinule
or rail, a few water buttes, some old fur
probably muskrat,

22 Gators examined by Richard Gordon
6 contained muskrats, the smallest of these
gators 4 feet long, 11 of these were not
over 4½ feet long, July 4 to 20.

All on marsh where muskrats were
very scarce.

See report and letter by Dick Gordon.

On July 22 Warden Gordon sent his two
~~boys~~ over to ~~Frank~~ ^{Boys} Chimes to take some people
across. On the way back they killed 18
Aligators in 10 miles along the bayou 3 to 6
feet long. Stomachs saved by

most wonderful trees, grotesque,
wicked, fantastic, swollen, beak,
fluted, ridged with arms
and flat topped with flying
festoons of ~~Andropogon~~ and
often surrounded by armies of
stumpy knees.

The two oaks are almost
as picturesque and sometimes
were more heavily draped with
vines.

Several large dolphins were
seen in the edge of Vermilion
Bay as we reached it at dusk.
They looked large, 12 or 15 feet long.

Lionel Le Blanc. (302 Box)
Abbeville, La.
Richard Gordon, Warden
Abbeville, La.

Went Beaver + Minkus Butts.
Both sent Aug. 6.

July 19, slept in the house boat
"Russel Sage" at the Rainey Refuge
and was not bothered with mosquitoes
tho they swarmed outside by millions.
Went in the Conservation Com.
the Sloop with Mr. Arthur and
Lionel Le Blanc to the Mackelhamer
head quarters and then went
upriver to near the Grand Omies
du Tigre, or Tigre Bayou Tigre.
following artificial canals most
of the way.

Saw lots of birds and about
4 or 7 alligators. ~~Sperry~~ shot
one 3 foot gator and ~~Sperry~~
Sperry shot a large turtle which
we had for supper.

Saw only one used muskrat
house on the trip. They are
scarce tho miles of fine marshes
for them were crossed.

Saw a 10 foot alligator dead in bayou.

Examined the stomachs of two
Alligators, 3 and 4 feet long, brought
in by Richard Gordon, warden
at the station. He shot 5 last
night coming from a dance
and Sperry saved the stomachs
of three. See previous page for
contents of 2 examined.

July 20, With the big boat at the
Rainie Station we went across Kuntia
Bay to Marsh Island and tramped
over considerable of the marsh.

Found muskrats numerous and well
distributed. Counted 10 freshly
repaired and more unrepaired houses
in a round of a mile or two and
got 2 liters of young from two
of the freshest houses opened.

One of these was a small house
well plastered all over with mud
and the other was a large house
partly plastered with mud.

Lieut. Le Blane says he
has found that mud plastered
houses generally contain young
and that older trappers have told
him the same.

In the first house were four
very small young, probably 3 or 4
days old and in the next house

we got only one young of a larger litter, probably 8 or 10 days old but with eyes not yet open. It was running about in the nest and probably the others had clung to the mother's teats and been carried away. Le Blanc says they are often carried this way and that his dog has killed a mother with four young clinging to the nipples.

These 5 young were brought to camp and placed with an old cat who had 4 young and 3 of her young were killed to make room for them. She made no objection but the young seem not inclined to nurse the mother cat, even when their noses are held against her teats.

They probably do not recognize the smell or taste as leading to food.

A little condensed milk was given
them with a spoon but I am hoping
the old cat will take the feeding
responsibility from me.

Found abundance of good food
for muskrats on Marsh Island and
considerable three square grass
Scirpus americanus? and in places
lots of *Scirpus robustus* and two or
three or more species of tree
Scirpus; cat tails, canes, and
many grasses. The "Couch grass"
or Cord grass, *Echinochloa*
is very abundant and much used by
the muskrats for building waterways and
apparently eaten to some extent.
The large Cord Grass, *Echinochloa glabra*,
is also very abundant but not
very valuable as muskrat food.
A large red top is also abundant
and there are many other grasses
and sedges and weeds. A large

Chenopodium was found in two places
with the branches cut off nearly to
the tops by muskrats!

Many rat houses had been broken
into by something, probably
coons & mice. and in two old
houses were found owl pellets. of
entirely muskrat fur and bones,
One had a skull of half grown muskrat
and a third pellet in an old
trappers cabin was entirely of fur
and bones of youngish muskrats.
These were all old pellets, last spring
or winter and were rather large
but probably barn owl.
One barn owl was shot at a
cabin where it lived and 8 or 10
pellets picked up were mainly bird
feathers and bones and large insects.
These were fresh pellets.

Mosquitoes were not very bad on
Marsh Island, not half as many as at the station.

There are some deer and many
marsh rabbits on Marsh Island
and said to be a good many alligators.
Trappers cabins are scattered over it
and it is one of the great muskrat
areas of the state. See report for numbers
caught last year.

July 21, Went over a part of the Paul Riney Refuge where there are plenty of muskrats and examined a lot of houses, opening 6 or 8, Found only one young, just born but dead. This was a mile east and half mile north of the station.

Then went over to the west side of Vermilion Bay and across the marsh to Bayou Farwan and to Farwan Lake on the State Refuge. Covered about 2 miles of marsh. and found signs of only one muskrat and no old houses less than 2 years old or older. Many deep burrows and tunnels cut the marshes up, but they are old. There is no *Scirpus*^{americanus}, but most of the marshes are full of small cord grass *Spartina juncea*, very dense. There are also strips of *Pichateau*, or the much pointed little *Scirpus*

LEO) 4000
3720
280

And again on the edges of the
marshes dense jungles of large Coral
Grass, *Spartina glabra* and in a
few strips some ^{big} Red Top.

On the part of the Rainey
Refuge examined in the morning
the trappers caught 12000 rats
on three sections last winter,
averaging about 4 rats to an acre
with plenty left for this years
crop.

Lionel LeBlanc tells me that
he made \$7000 last winter trapping
but he had a large base all
sub let. His younger brother
has averaged \$10000 a year for
3 years trapping, but not doing
all the trapping himself.

July 22 Returned with Mr. Arthur
to Abbeville where we parted
he going to Lake Charles, La.,
where I hope to join him tomorrow
and I bringing my 3 swimming
young muskrats and the old yellow
cat that is nursing them and
her one remaining kitten, to
Morgan City enroute to
camp down the river to
leave them with the Swobbas.

Came by bus from Abbeville
to New Iberia, by another bus
to Franklin, another to Morgan
City. leaving Abbeville at 2 PM
and reaching Morgan City at
7:40 PM.

All the way through rich farming
country with good crops of sugar
cane, cotton, rice, corn and
vegetables. Beautiful along the
Verde River & Bayou Teche.

July 23, Mr. Julius Hubbard
took me down to our camp
at Pumping Station No. 3.
Two of the little muskrats from
Marsh Island died but the
larger one was still hearty and
full of pup. The old cat left
us in the night but she had
done her part well in caring
for the muskrat babies. It was
their fault that they did not
take kindly to cat's milk or
cat nursing. Their teeth came
out thorough when 5 or 6 days old
and they were inclined to use them
in holding on while the older
kittens with eyes open have
no teeth yet.

Found the Bobolinks with four
old and two young muskrats
all doing well. Packed up and
said good bye.

✓ Alligators

A 16 foot alligator is the largest Carruthers has ever seen.

Last year 1924, two were killed 130 Alligators in ~~the~~ ^{the} lake east of Johnson Bayou. in one night

Johnny Carruthers tells of seeing two large male alligator fight savagely for an hour before he shot and killed them both. One was 10 and one 11 feet long. They bit and struck with their tails and pulled and pushed and grunted and bellowed and when examined their feet and legs were cut and gashed and many cuts were found on the bodies. He thinks they would have fought to the death of one and perhaps both.

Came here to Morgan City and took a 9 pm train for Orange, Texas and Mr. Arthur at ~~the~~ ^{the} Holland Hotel.

Met Mr. Rayburn, Mr. ^{Atty} Jones and Johnny Carruthers, conservation agent for the Orange Land Co. and talked muskrats and alligators all the evening.

✓ Carruthers has hunted alligator here in Texas for 25 years and tells of the great numbers in waters where they had never been hunted before, killing 200 in a night in one pond where their eyes shone like stars in the sky. They were so numerous. Has killed many 12 and 14 feet long and one that was ^{12 1/2} 13 feet but bobtailed and tail 5 inches thick at end. Thinks it would have been ¹⁶ 17 or 18 feet long. Has taken as high as 60 eggs from a nest.

✓ 100 000 rats on 9000 acres
gives an average a little over 10
to an acre but the rats were
evidently all caught as there
are none on the ground now.
We could not find a fresh sign.
Firm ground, a light stand of grass and
clean burrows made it easy to get the
last rat & Mr. Ward said they trapped
to the last of February when there were
lots of kits and the females all had embryos.

July 24 -

Went with Mr. Rayburn, the two Joneses
and Mr. Ward to the muskrat
marshes ~~near~~ below Port Arthur
Marshes owned by Mr. McFadden
of ~~Port Arthur~~ ^{Beaumont}, Ward's Father-in-law.

✓ He owns 50000 acres of marsh
land ^{below Port Arthur} but the best of it is trapping
is on the 9000 acres we planned
where they caught last winter
about 100 000 muskrats. In
all they took 160 000 rats
which sold for \$140 000, the largest
rat ranch in Texas. In fact only
40 000 more were taken in the
state making 200 000 in all.

These were taken between Galveston
bay and the Sabine. A few run up
in the ditches and rice fields as
far north as Beaumont and Orange.

Last year was very dry and the
Scirpus americanus and robustus

were mostly killed out by drought
and salt water so the marshes
would not now support a large rat
population - It will be interesting to
see if any rats came back next
winter and we can find out from
Mr. McFadden or C. E. Ward
of Beaumont.

Picked up a few skulls and got one
skin of muskrat from Mr. Ward.
- Returned to Orange in evening.

July 25 Down Sabine River
& lake about through Johnson
Bayou to the coast all down
15 miles east to the Orange
Land Co. Muskrat Camp
No. 1. The main camp, in
the middle of the Smith prairie
on the Gulf.

The Company owns 130,000
acres of marsh land, or waste, all
in a body but the trapped only
30,000 acres last year. Caught
and the muskrats were not found
on a lot of this land. The Co.
trapped 80,000 rats on this piece
and the Rental Brown Co. who
also claimed the right to trap on
this land also claimed a catch
of 42,000 rats. This makes 122,000
rats on 30,000 acres, or really
on about half of that. A full report
on these rats was made by the Co. and they
have promised us a copy of it.

Found where hogs had rooted up
muskrat houses and every burrow
around in search of muskrats and
the young. Hogs are said to destroy
great numbers in summer and to
follow the traps ~~lines~~ in winter
and eat all the rats they could
find in the traps. Besides
these damages the hogs eat the
same food as the rats do and
thus are the one of the worst enemies
of the muskrat.

Oil is also an enemy
along some of the shipping
bayous,

The Orange and Co. have a
very complete camp at head quarters,
where they sometimes have 100 men
at a time. They have a drying
house with racks for 17500 skins
at a time on a track so it
rolls out doors in the sun
or back inside when it rains
or is damp and at night
where they have a furnace for
drying inside.

The Co. furnishes traps
150 to 200 to a man, all
Gipps traps that kill the rats.
They last about 15 years if
aired and taken care of.

They have 30000 traps
and take good care of them,
airing them as soon as the season
is over and soaking for the summer.

Mr. Charles Taborn has
lived all his life near here and

numbers 30 years ago that
there were lots of muskrats here
but they did not trap them then.
Seeps there were plenty of alligators
then too.

Another man born in the marsh
40 years ago - the son of old man Pleasant,
says there were very few muskrats
and he remembers the first one he ever
saw about 25 years ago.
I could not get in touch with the old man
who is 70 and has been here a long time.

July 26, Went in Ford Car from
Camp no. 2, to no. 3, 4 miles farther
east along the beach, then back
a mile to the edge of Mud Lake which
is now dry. It is usually a shallow
fresh water lake but has dried up in
the present prolonged drought and all the
fish and crabs and turtles and clams are
dead. Shells and bones of both
needle gars and alligator gars are
scattered by hundreds over the
mud flats and bogs have feasted on
dead things along the shore.

When the new canal is cut across
about 20 miles to the Muskeget camp
no. 2, a lateral will be cut into
Mud Lake to fill it with fresh water
from Sabine River and the lake as well
as the great marsh will be reclaimed
as muskeget and duck ground.

The lake is a famous waterport used
when there is water in it.

Returned to Orange the way
we came ~~and went to see~~
and got Dr. Pierce to examine
a very sore finger which has
become infected and threatens
blood poisoning.

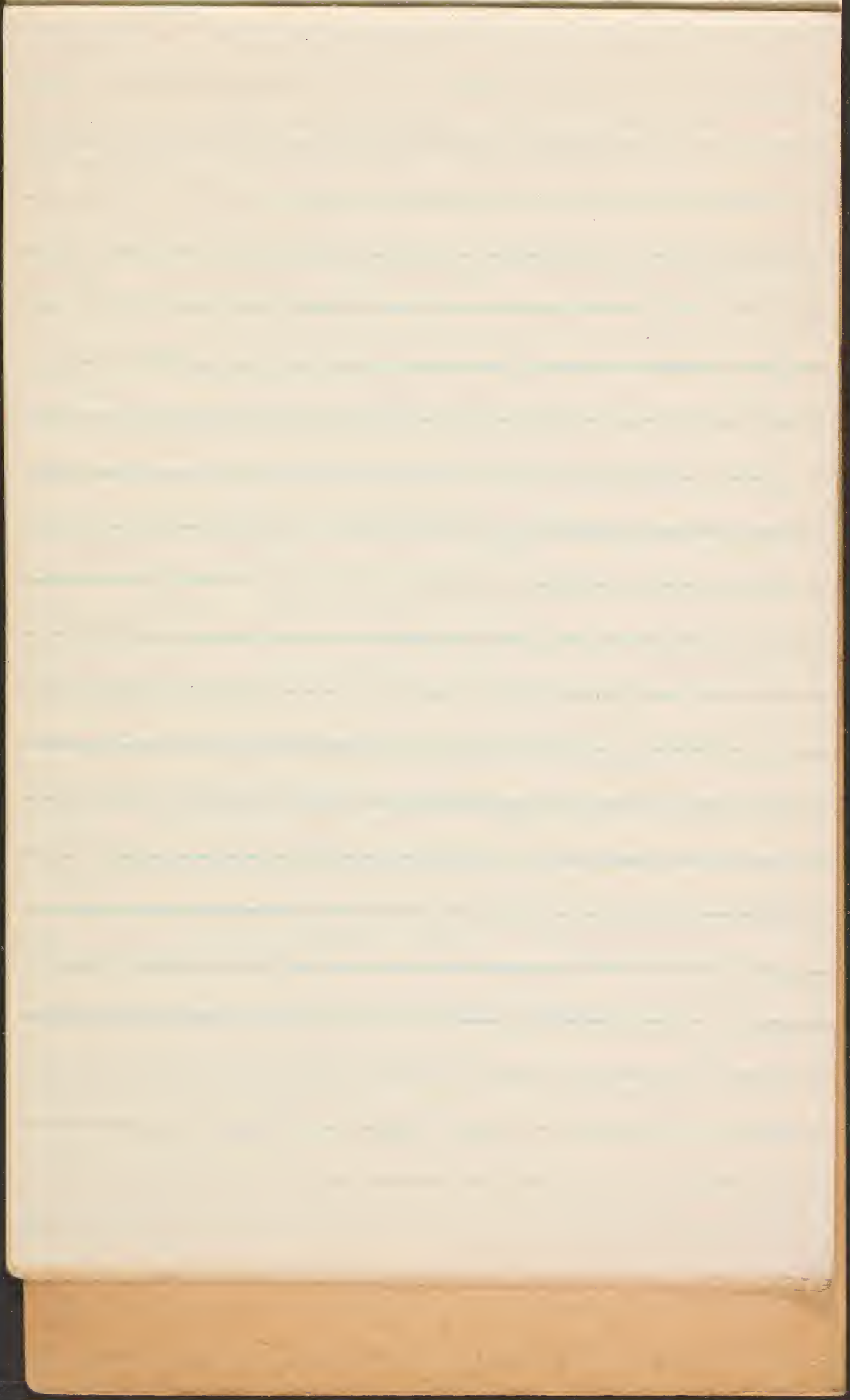
Planned a trip through
Black Bayou and the inter-
coastal Canal east of Orange
to examine more muskeget
marshes and the breeding
grounds of the Roseate Spoonbill.

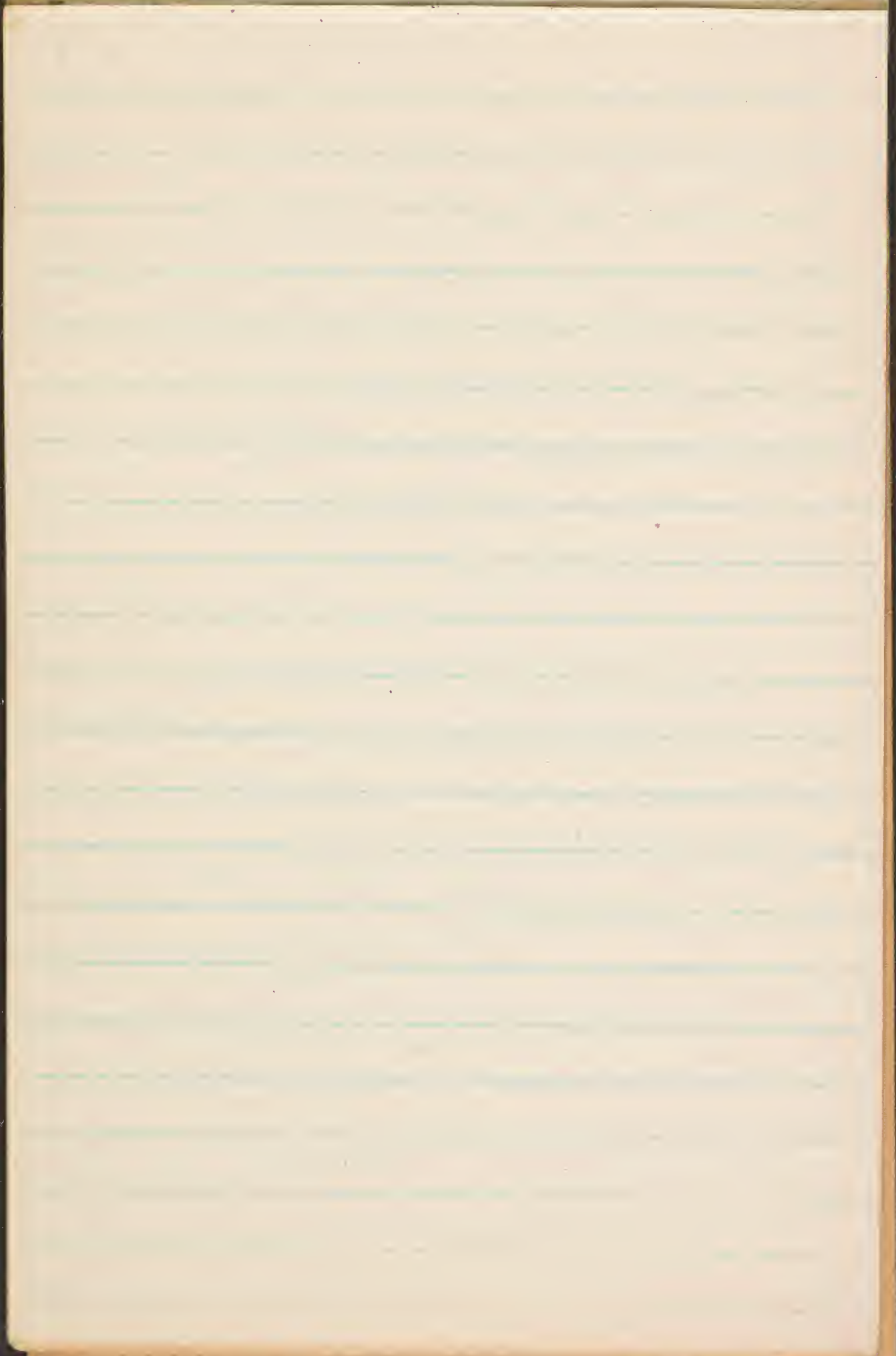
July 27

My finger is worse
and swelling up my hand so
decided to give up the trip
and catch the first train for
Washington

Left Orange, Texas at 10:15
AM and New Orleans at
10 PM on the Crescent
limited

Parted with Mr. Arthur
at New Orleans after a two
week trip over the state
gathering much valuable
information on muskrats
and other rural life.





No. 3. Zyphe
 Not *Lathraea* nor *argemone*, *scroph.*
 not much eaten by *molluscs* -
 Mostly killed off by burning when dry.

No. 2. Milk of the grass in water.
 Much eaten by *molluscs*. Grows in
 after some fire.

No. 1. *Plants collected*
Morgan City Camp, La.
June 27

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 BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY.

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